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SUBJECT: CODEL Payne and the Garang Memorial Service

REF: Khartoum 01857

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On July 31, over 6,000 people attended the Government of Southern Sudan's (GoSS) memorial service in Juba for their late leader, Dr. John Garang, who died one year earlier. Congressman Donald Payne led the U.S. delegation to the event. During his speech, GoSS President Salva Kiir complained of slow CPA implementation, while reaffirming his support for a UN deployment in Darfur. During the proceedings, and more emphatically in private meetings with the congressman, Garang's widow Rebecca demanded an expanded investigation into the circumstances of her husband's death. Also during the event, the Governor of Central Equatoria (Bahr Al Jebel) State, a militia leader and member of the northern National Congress Party, officially joined SPLM. End Summary.

International Community Supports GoSS, CPA

¶2. (U) Speakers from the international community, including UN Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) Jan Pronk, AU Special Representative Baba Gana Kingibe, Norwegian Minister of International Development Hilde Johnson, and representatives from East Africa, Egypt, France, Italy. Both Congressman Payne and Special Representative of the Deputy Secretary Roger Winter also spoke, emphasizing the United States' continued commitment to peace, stability, and development in Sudan.

NCP Criticized, Contradicted, and Contracted

¶3. (U) Salva Kiir Mayardit, who assumed Garang's position as First Vice President of the Republic of the Sudan and the President of the GoSS, expressed dissatisfaction with the implementation of the CPA and blamed the NCP for moving slowly and failing to resolve such key issues as the Abyei boundary, the North-South border, and transparency in the oil sector. He did, however, acknowledge an improvement in NCP/SPLM relations. Kiir also reiterated the GoSS/SPLM position supporting deployment of UN troops to Darfur, which the NCP opposes.

¶4. (U) The governor of Central Equatoria (Bahr Al Jebel) State, Major Gen. Clement Wani Konga, announced during the celebration that he would be leaving the NCP and officially joining the SPLM with his militia, the strongest in Central Equatoria. Wani became governor under a power-sharing arrangement that gave the NCP two governorships in the south (the other NCP governor is in Upper Nile State), but he has been cooperating with the SPLM for more than a year and rumors had been circulating over his defection.

Cause of Garang's Death Retakes Center Stage

¶5. (U) During her speech, Rebecca Garang announced that she did not accept the findings of the investigation into her husband's death, which ruled it pilot error. She believes her husband was murdered

and called for the GoSS to launch an expanded investigation. The investigation commission was chaired by former Sudanese Vice President Abel Alier and included experts from Russia and the U.S.'s National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB). Abel Alier attended the memorial event as a speaker.

Rebecca Garang Raises Suspicions on Cause of Crash

¶6. (SBU) In a private meeting with CODEL Payne, Rebecca Garang was even more explicit. She requested U.S. support for an investigation and indicated she would not accept any result other than the identification of her husband's killers. She said that foul play is the only explanation for the fact that the pilots did not turn back when her husband expressed concern, as heard on the black box. She also said the satellite photos of the crash site showed extra bodies, that the pilots may have committed suicide, and that increased chatter among Libyans and Egyptians, including Egyptian calls on the death before it was announced, indicate a wider conspiracy. The widow called for everyone involved, including herself, to take a lie detector test. She indicated that Kiir must support the renewed investigation or suffer the consequences.
(Note: CODEL Payne's meeting with Kiir is covered in reftel. End note.)

¶7. (SBU) She said that she had met and talked at length with the representative of the National Transportation Safety Board who participated in the investigative committee. Congressman Payne observed that helicopters are normally among the safest modes of flight, but was otherwise noncommittal on the investigative process.

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